



27.03.2023

A tribute to the 80th birthday of Father Shay Cullen, PREDA

Dear Shay,

We wish you all the best for your 80th birthday! Above all, you should stay healthy and be able to spend your time in the Philippines a little more peacefully. GEPA has been working with PREDA, the child protection organisation you founded in the Philippines, for 40 years already.

When you came to the Philippines as a young priest in 1969, you were confronted with child prostitution on the streets of Olongapo every day. Freeing children from prostitution or prisons and reducing the poverty of the people in the countryside became your life's mission.

That's why you founded the PREDA organisation. First rattan furniture, later dried mangoes – by marketing these products, you contributed to reducing poverty in the countryside. For you, Fair Trade was a good way to create income for adults in the countryside and thus also to prevent the misery of child prostitution.

Your commitment to justice was dangerous, death threats are still part of PREDA's everyday life. You spoke uncomfortable truths in your daily work, in court, in your newspaper columns and in lectures all over the world. Despite all this, you have always continued your work and for this you deserve great respect and thanks!

You have received many awards for your work, including the Human Rights Award of the City of Weimar in 2000 and the Martin Buber Plaque in 2017. You have also been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize a whopping four times, which is a great honour in itself. Fortunately, the many awards you have received for your work over the years have always protected you from attacks. They are a kind of guardian angel!

I personally consider myself very lucky to have met you and the PREDA team in 1987. The time at PREDA has left a lasting impression on me - as it has on many other people.

Congratulations on behalf of all GEPA colleagues!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Claudia Grözinger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Claudia Grözinger

Information Officer
GEPA – The Fair Trade Company